

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

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Bob -

I'd like to hear your
version of the conference. Let's
set a lunch date at your
convenience.

Holbert

Mr. Robert Tuttle
Special Assistant to the President
Room 153, Old EOB

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NATO: Time

By ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.

The conference organized by Aspen Institute Berlin tackled the topic "Where is the U.S.A. Heading?"—a question to which this occasional conference-goer has long sought the answer. I cannot say that I found it in West Berlin at the end of last month, but the experience had its lessons. Present were parliamentarians, journalists and professors from half a dozen West European countries, a man from the Institute of U.S.A. and Canadian Studies in Moscow, and an amply disharmonious American group ranging from the far right (three fervent Reaganites) to the liberal left.

The veteran conference-goer becomes wearily familiar with the litany of mutual complaint at these Euro-American shows. Through the long years, one has heard Europeans plead for more leadership from Washington—and then bridle when it comes. For long years, Americans proclaim their hope for real European unity and independence—and then resent it when Europeans take them at their word. But in the past, recrimination went on within hearty agreement on assessments and purposes. For the first time, I had the altogether disquieting feeling that the consensus itself may be breaking down.

'Unilateral Globalism'

The Europeans who were at the Berlin conference agree in seeing an inevitable, if relative, decline in America's weight in the world, though they see it mainly as a decline in economic power, not as American conservatives do, in military power. The U.S. dominated the world in the years after World War II, a French international-affairs specialist said, because it accounted for half the world's gross national product. Now, as other nations resume economic growth, the U.S. becomes a "normal" country again, moreover, one dependent as never before on the international economy. The task of adjustment to relative decline, the Europeans think, is the crucial problem facing the U.S.

In this context, the Reagan policies appear to them an effort, almost as if by main force, to reverse decline, regain control and restore American predominance. These policies produce, in this European view, what an Italian journalist called "unilateral globalism." The term means the aggressive assertion of fancied American interests everywhere around the planet without much attention to the interests of America's allies. The phrase struck a chord; for other Europeans repeated it with relish throughout the conference.

Unilateral globalism has resulted in what many Europeans regard as a dangerously nationalistic, militaristic, ideological, confrontationalist, go-it-alone policy in Washington. David Watt, the former head of Chatham House, the British equivalent of the Council on Foreign Relations, discusses in the current Foreign Affairs magazine the criticism this policy has aroused and

the consequent loss of confidence in American leadership. It is in my experience almost impossible, Mr. Watt writes, "to convey even to the most experienced Americans just how deeply rooted and widely spread the critical view has become."

A few Europeans do applaud the Reagan line. These are very often the only Europeans Reaganites see when they travel abroad, which gives Washington a skewed view of European opinion. So far as I could tell, there was not a single Reaganite among the more than 20 West Europeans of diverse political views in Berlin. Nor were there any neutralists or pacifists. No one, for example, appeared to object to the deployment of the medium-range missiles in Europe.

The Soviet threat brought the North At-

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lantic Treaty Organization into existence 35 years ago; and the consensus is breaking down, not because of neutralism or pacifism, but because of growing disagreement over the character of that threat today. The West Europeans simply do not see the Soviet Union as a dynamic, masterful, successful nation. They cannot take seriously the Reaganite conviction that the Kremlin, once it acquires a certain numerical superiority, will give the order to invade Central Europe or to knock out the Minuteman missiles in the U.S. They consider Eastern Europe as a collection not of enslaved and obedient puppets, but of restive peoples and regimes seeking ways to elude and frustrate Soviet domination. They doubt that the Third World would be full of peace and love if it were not for the Russians.

These West Europeans see Washington as obsessed with the Soviet Union, exaggerating Soviet strength, attributing all the world's manifold problems to Soviet devilry and generally overreacting to the Soviet problem. They are tired of what Lord Carrington, NATO's new secretary general, has called "megaphone diplomacy." They wonder whether Washington really wants nuclear arms control. One of our Reaganites condemned detente as a "spectacular failure" and offered an impassioned justification of President Reagan's attack on the evil empire. Such remarks, a West German parliamentarian gloomily responded, "only confirm our gravest doubts about the Reagan administration." "Detente," added a German professor, "is misunderstood by American conservatives

for a Divorce?

as a synonym for appeasement. For Europeans, détente is a necessity. It means only a common interest in the survival of the human race.

This disagreement played into the hands of the man from Moscow, who delivered a powerful lamentation over the grievous condition into which Soviet-American relations had fallen. The relationship, he said, is "at the lowest level, the most dangerous level, since the end of the Second World War." His institute had discussed for more than a year whether the Reagan administration had a foreign policy. At first, the experts thought that Mr. Reagan had an ideology but not a policy. Now we have reached the firm conclusion that Reagan has a clear-cut policy, a policy different from that of all previous American administrations, a policy di-

want to understand them." At the same time, Europeans—at least those around the conference table in Berlin—have no doubt about the indispensability of American nuclear protection. They are not unilateral disarmers, and the need for nuclear deterrence limits their ability to escape dependence. Still they cherish the dream of independence.

The movement toward European autonomy is gathering strength. Britain's Margaret Thatcher visits Budapest and Moscow, calls for renewed efforts at arms control, condemns the American invasion of Grenada. Helmut Kohl of West Germany, another conservative head of government, multiplies contacts and arrangements with communist East Germany. David Owen, the leader of Britain's new Social Democratic Party, calls on Europe to take control of its own security policy and free its defense from U.S. domination. Europe, Mr. Owen notes, already provides more than 90% of the ground forces, 80% of the main battle tanks and combat aircraft and two-thirds of the ships in NATO's European area. European defense ministers are planning an autumn meeting—without U.S. participation—to move ahead on what they call the "Europeanization" of European security.

Divorce Isn't Likely

Peregrine Worsthorne, the Tory columnist in the London Sunday Telegraph, even wonders whether, in view of the recession of the Soviet military threat, Europe might not want to "opt out" of NATO. "It makes some sense for the U.S. to want to conscript us into the global battle against the U.S.S.R. But would not our interests be better served by refusing to comply?"

A separate relationship with the Soviet Union and a less close one with the U.S. are no longer options that only leftists can be expected to espouse," Mr. Worsthorne concludes that "the common interest might best be served by early divorce while relations are still amicable."

Divorce is not likely. The Europeans, for all their complaints, still lack the will to real independence from the U.S. and unity among themselves. But the current is running toward separation. Western Europe seems increasingly determined not to be dragged along by the wheels of Mr. Reagan's ideological crusades.

Americans may indeed be standing tall these days, as our president assures us, but it isn't going to help much if we stand tall all by ourselves. We continue to need allies, not only to temper our own messianic delusions, but also for the eminently practical reason that there are few foreign policy objectives in the real world that we can attain by going it alone.

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Contributors

with the Soviet Union and are no longer options that espouse," says one Tory.

rected at the overthrow of the Soviet system."

The Reagan administration, the man from the institute continued, defines Soviet-American relations as a zero-sum game. What one side gains, the other side loses. Soviet leaders had not hitherto regarded the relationship as a zero-sum game, "but I tell you frankly, they are moving in that direction. I am very pessimistic. Sometimes I think we have passed the point of no return. People say, 'It was always an illusion to suppose we could cooperate with the Americans. They are out to destroy us. We must look to our own survival.'"

No doubt this line is designed in part as propaganda to stimulate protests against the Reagan line in the West. Our Reaganites read the Soviet delegate's words to mean that the confrontationist policy is working and that the enemy is on the run. The West European reaction is less complacent. "Russia created Reagan," Prof. Richard Lowenthal of the Free University of Berlin told the Soviet delegate, recalling the Soviet military buildup and Third World adventurism of the 1970s. But Prof. Lowenthal and the other Europeans read the Soviet remarks as far more than propaganda and took them to represent authentic and urgent concern.

As confidence in the judgment of the U.S. wanes, the Europeans give a stronger impression than ever before of looking for a way out. A State Department official perceptively observed, "Europeans want to escape dependence on an America they can't understand and that doesn't seem to